

Serial No. 09/881,673
Amendment Dated April 12, 2005
Reply to Office Action of January 12, 2005

Docket No. IK-0020

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-6, 11-18, 21-23, 25-26, and 28-30 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 11, 12, 21, 26, and 28 are amended, and claims 7-10, 19-20, 24, and 27 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims and the drawings. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance in due course in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter; (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal, if necessary. Entry is thus requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 2-6 and 15-18 are allowed, and that claims 10-12, 24, and 27-28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The subject matter of allowable claims 10, 24, and 27 has been incorporated into independent claims 1, 21, and 26,

respectively. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 21, and 26, as well as rejected dependent claims 13-14, 22-23, 25, and 29-30, and objected to claims 11-12 and 28, which depend respectively therefrom, should be in condition for allowance. Further, claims 7-9 and 19-20 are cancelled. Accordingly, the application should be in condition for allowance.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 7-8, 13-14, 19-23, 26, and 29-30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,359,270 to Bridson in view or U.S. Patent No. 5,063,600 to Norwood. Claims 7-8 and 19-20 are cancelled. The rejection, in so far as it applies to claims 1, 13-14, 21-23, 26, and 29-30, is respectfully traversed.

The subject matter of allowable claims 10, 24, and 27 has been incorporated into independent claims 1, 21, and 26, respectively. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 21, and 26 are allowable over the applied combination of prior art references, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1, 21, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bridson and Norwood should be withdrawn. Rejected dependent claims 13-14, 22-23, and 29-30, as well as objected to claims 11-12 and 28, are allowable at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 1, 21, and 26, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

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The Office Action rejects claims 9 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridson and Norwood, and further in view of McGill et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002-0016734 (hereinafter “McGill”). Claim 9 is cancelled. The rejection, in so far as it applies to claim 25, is respectfully traversed.

Claim 25 depends from independent claim 21. As noted above, claim 21 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 24. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 25 is also allowable, and the rejection of claim 25 should be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, **Joanna K. Mason**, at the telephone number listed below. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

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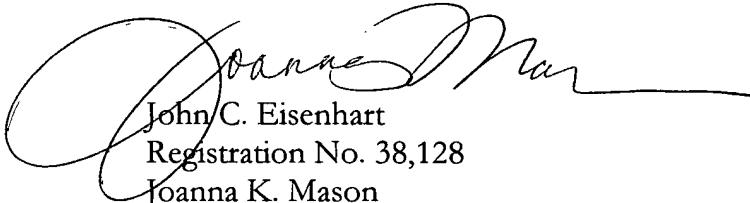
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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: April 12, 2005

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